

LING 625: Seminar in phonology

Instructor: Adam McCollum

Class Meetings: Mondays and Tuesdays 10:20 – 11:40 am

Classroom: Room 108

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You see, I went on with this research just the way it led me. That is the only way I ever heard of research going. I asked a question, devised some method of getting an answer, and got a fresh question. Was this possible, or that possible? You cannot imagine what this means to an investigator, what an intellectual passion grows upon him.

-HG Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*

Since its inception, the Generative program has been intimately tied to issues of computational complexity and the general expressivity of the human language faculty. In this seminar we will probe one sub-concern within the grammar – *does phonology count?* We will lay some basic mathematical foundations using recent research in computational phonology, specifically work using formal language theory. We will connect relevant mathematical properties of phonological grammars to issues in learnability. Throughout the course these issues will be interwoven with empirical claims made in the literature. It is my hope that we can use these empirical claims as jumping off points to discuss the issue at hand – how high does phonology count, and if so, what bearing does that have on the human language faculty?

As a seminar, this class is highly dependent on reading and discussion. If you do not do the readings, you will likely be unable to meaningfully participate in discussion, and in turn will miss out on further formation of ideas that emerges via discussion. Thus, I expect everyone to read the assigned papers and come to class prepared to actively discuss them.

Your grade in this class is based on the following: participation, leading discussion, and writing a final paper relating the topics from this class to your own research.

- Each student officially enrolled in the class will be expected to lead or co-lead discussion on a number of papers during the term.
- Each student officially enrolled in the class will be expected to write a final paper connecting the topic of the seminar to their own research. Ideally, this would involve a paper on the computational properties of some phonological pattern claimed to involve counting of some sort, but other options are possible, and should be discussed with me. *Remember, the goal of these things is to give you a platform for your research and launching pad for some of those first publications.*

Week	Date	Topic	Readings to discuss	Facilitator	Landmarks
1	9/7	Intro		Adam	
2	9/11	Empirical and theoretical concerns	McCarthy & Prince 1986 sections 1 – 2.1	Adam	
	9/14		McCarthy & Prince sections 2.2 – end	Adam	
3	9/18	Basics of formal language theory	Heinz 2018 sections 1 – 5	Adam	
	9/21		Heinz 2018 sections 6 – 9	Adam	
4	9/25	Counting	Paster 2019		
	9/28				
5	10/2	Locality: Stress	Heinz 2009		
	10/5		Stanton 2016		
6	10/9				
	10/12		Lamont 2021		
7	10/16	Locality: Tone	Jardine 2017		
	10/19		Jardine 2020		Initial meeting
	8		10/23	Hyman & Nyamwaro 2023	
9	10/26	Counting violations	Kawahara & Breiss 2021		
	10/30		Shih 2017		
	11/2				
10	11/6	Counting triggers	Dresher & Nevins 2017		
	11/9	More counting	Andersson et al 2020		
11	11/13		Krämer 2001		
	11/16	Iterativity	Chandlee 2022		Second meeting
<i>No class the week of Thanksgiving</i>					
13	11/27	TBD			
	11/30	TBD			
14	12/4	TBD			
	12/7	Presentations			
15	12/11	Presentations			
	12/14	Presentations			
<i>Paper due Friday, December 22 by 4:00 pm</i>					

Partial reference list

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- Shih, S., 2017. Constraint conjunction in weighted probabilistic grammar. *Phonology*, 34(2), pp.243-268.
- Stanton, J., 2016. Learnability shapes typology: the case of the midpoint pathology. *Language*, pp.753-791.